

Office of the Ombudsman January 2008 Case Report

Each month the Office of the Ombudsman will provide a report summarizing its activity. This report details the activity of the office in January 2008.

Cases by Public Education System

The Office of the Ombudsman took action on 33 cases in January 2008. Figure 1 shows the number of requests for support by public education system. The office responded to 25 individuals who had concerns with the District of Columbia Public School (DCPS). One person contacted the office with a concern about the University of the District of Columbia (UDC). Individuals from Public Charter Schools (PCS) represented 7 of the 33 cases.

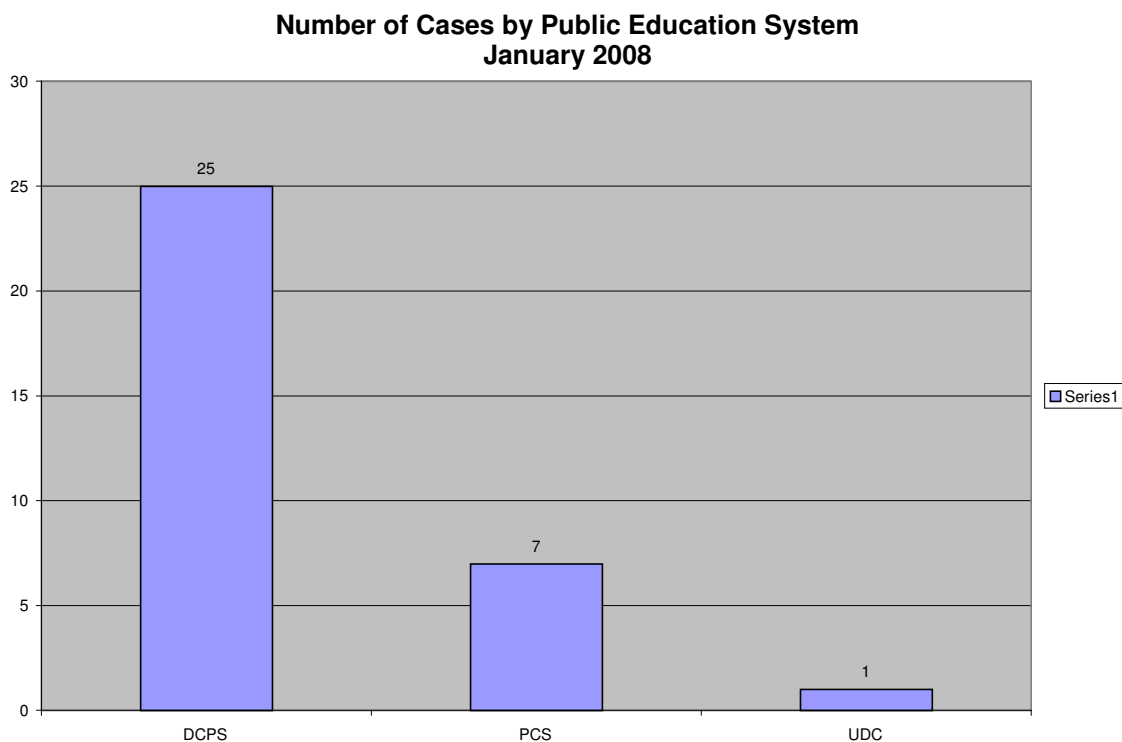


Figure 1 – Cases by Public Education System

Cases by Issue

Table 1 lists the issue code, the corresponding category and the total number of cases in that category for the month. The office addressed 36 issues. The total number of issues that the office addressed exceeds the total number of cases because some individuals contact the office with multiple concerns. For example, individuals who contact the office about special education may also have a concern about suspension. We track those issues separately to more accurately monitor trends in concerns about public education.

Table 1 – Case Code Definitions

| Code | Definition | January Issue Total |
|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| PAM | Personnel Administrative | 2 |
| PPB | Personnel Pay/Benefits | 3 |
| PSH | Personnel Safety/Harassment | 3 |
| SAM | Student Administrative | 7 |
| SMD | Student Medical | 2 |
| SSE | Student Special Education | 3 |
| SSS | Student Safety/Abuse/Bullying | 7 |
| SST | Student Suspension Truancy | 7 |
| SPX | Student Other | 2 |

Figure 2 illustrates the relative frequency of issues addressed for the month. 78 percent of the issues that the Ombudsman investigated in January were student related issues. Figures 3 and 4 provide a more detailed report by type of issue separated by personnel and student.

January 2008 Cases by Issue

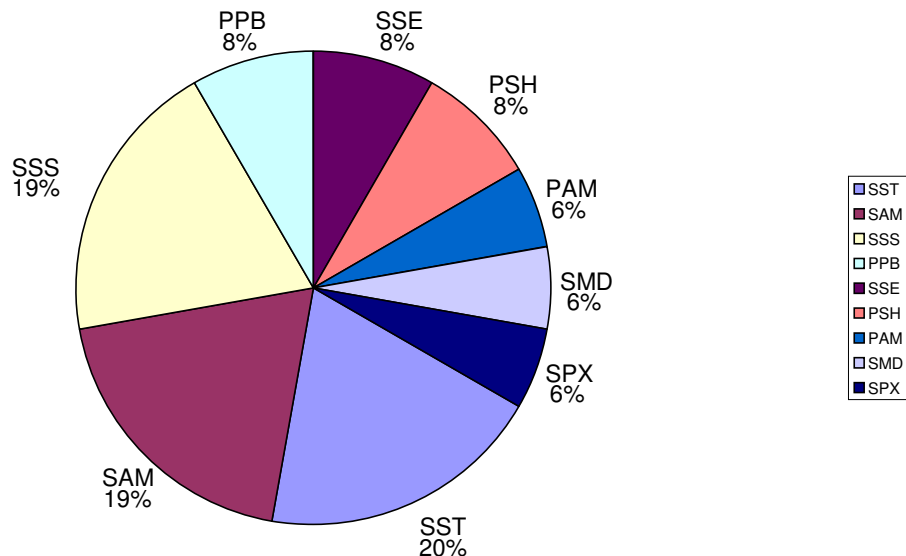


Figure 2 – Cases by Issue

Figure 3 represents the issues brought by public school personnel. Eight public school staff members contacted the Ombudsman. Public school staff reported an equal number of concerns about payment-related issues (PPB), and safety and harassment (PSH). Two public school staff reported harassment from supervisors, one from PCS and one from DCPS. The final issue in the safety and harassment category was a report of verbal abuse from an administrative staff against a public school retiree.

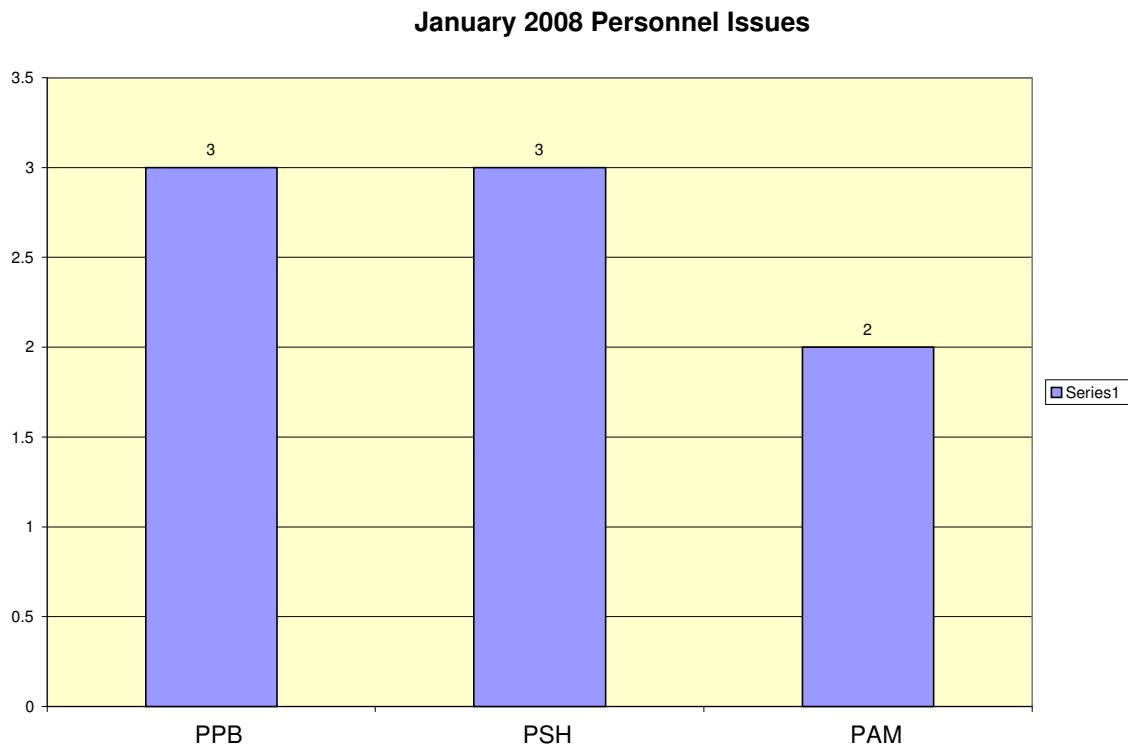


Figure 3 – Personnel Issues

Figure 4 is a summary of student-related cases that the Office of the Ombudsman worked on in January. An equal number of people contact the office about Safety and abuse issues (SSS - 7); Student Administrative (SAM - 7) and Student Suspension and Truancy (SST - 7). Each of these issue categories represented 25 percent of student cases. SSS cases included individuals who reported bullying and physical/verbal abuse by teachers and other students. Student Administrative issues included a parent who reported that students in her child's school were committing discrimination; a mother who believed the school incorrectly reported her daughter's attendance record and a mother who wanted her child transferred to another a new classroom environment.

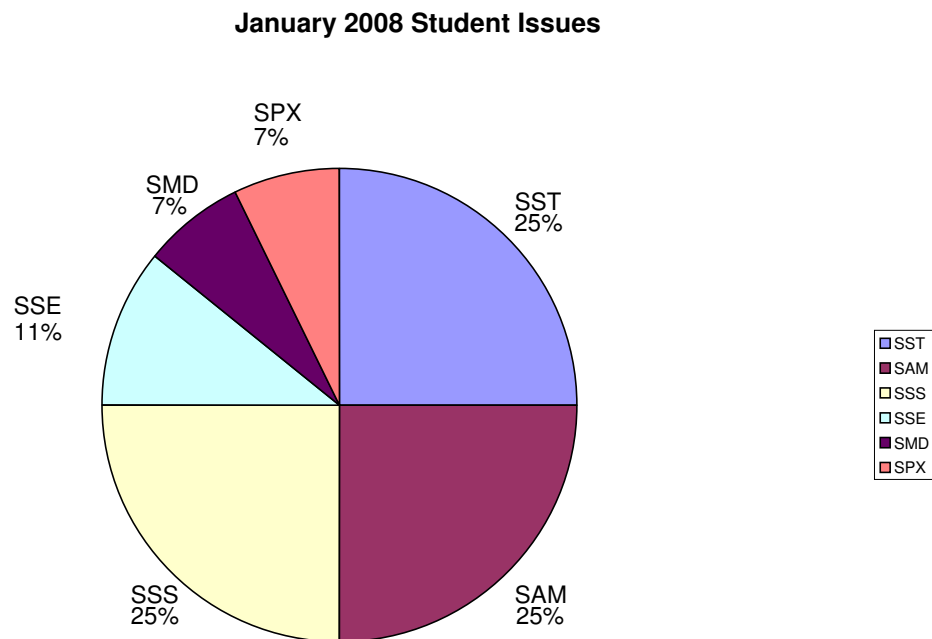


Figure 4 – Student Issues

Special Education (SSE) cases represented 11 percent of the student issues. The concerns about special education included long waits for evaluations and failure by public schools to deliver required special education services. Parents and advocates continued to request support for students placed on long-term suspensions.

In one special education case, a charter school placed a special education student on long term suspension. Charter schools do not have an alternative education site for students on long-term suspension. The charter schools send work home for the student. In the case brought to the Ombudsman, the special education student did not receive any of the services required by the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for over six weeks while on suspension. The case identified an area for corrective action and continued monitoring.

Conclusion

January 2008 cases are generally consistent with the number and types of cases that the Office of the Ombudsman received in December 2007. In December the Ombudsman took action on 40 cases, with a majority of the issues related to students. The January cases totaled 33, with 78 percent focused on students.